

HOME DINING RECREATION TRAVEL COMMUNITY HEALTH STYLE

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Celebrate
the SEASON

The popular eggy holiday drink goes into the dough and the glaze for Spiced Eggnog Biscotti by chef Nina Saputo Riggs, owner of The Pasta Girl catering and specialty foods company.

PUTTIN' ON THE NOG

Make the winter favorite at home and imbue bread pudding, biscotti, pancakes, and marshmallows with its rich, seasonal flavors.

BY JAIME LEWIS

A DESCENDENT OF POSSET, a spiced medieval English milk punch that often included eggs, eggnog may have derived its name from the word *nog*, meaning a strong beer brewed in what was then East Anglia, England. Other sources claim that it may come from the word *noggin*, a term describing a small wooden cup.

Famous eggnog enthusiasts throughout history include George Washington, whose rather saucy personal recipe called for a combination of brandy, rye whiskey, rum, and sherry, and Jefferson Davis, who 35 years before he was elected president of the Confederacy participated in a Christmas party at West Point that quickly erupted into the alcohol-fueled Eggnog Riot of 1826.

Today eggnog is recognized more for its custardy texture and holiday spices than for its booziness. Though it's widely available in cartons on grocery store shelves from November through the end of the year, many Central Coast chefs are riffing on the traditional Yuletide tippie with a spectrum of inventive treats, like biscotti, bread pudding, pancakes, and even marshmallows. They've generously offered their recipes here so that you can get in the kitchen and get in the spirit.

A NOTE ON FOOD SAFETY

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (foodsafety.gov), homemade eggnog is safe for consumption as long as the egg-milk base is cooked gently until it registers 160°F on a candy thermometer or is made with pasteurized eggs or egg products. However, even if you're using pasteurized eggs, both the FDA and the USDA recommend starting with a cooked egg base for optimal safety.

SPICED EGNGOG BISCOTTI

"My father was a big fan of eggnog," says chef Nina Saputo Riggs, owner of The Pasta Girl (thepastagirl.com), an Oak Park-based caterer and specialty food purveyor. "As soon as it was available in the markets during the holiday season, he would bring some home. I remember loving the spices he used to make the nonalcoholic eggnog drinks for me and my brothers when we were growing up. This recipe has all the flavors of that wonderful memory."

For these spiced Italian-style cookies, Riggs recommends using King Arthur Flour, or another high-quality type, and really feeling the dough to shape it into logs. "Be Italian and use your hands," she says.

Makes 30 medium biscotti

BISCOTTI

- 2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup canola oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup eggnog
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole pecans or other nuts (optional)

GLAZE

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup powdered sugar
- 4 teaspoons eggnog
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

To make biscotti: Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a rimmed baking sheet or line it with parchment paper. >





In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves, and salt. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and stir in canola oil, eggnog, and vanilla. Blend with your hands until dough comes together, incorporating nuts, if using.

On a lightly floured surface, divide dough in half and use your hands to shape into two logs, each 2½x12 inches and ½ inch high. Transfer logs to prepared baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes until logs are firm to the touch. Place baking sheet on wire rack allowing logs to cool for 15 minutes. Maintain oven temperature.

With two spatulas, move cooled logs to a cutting board. Using a serrated knife, cut each log on a diagonal into ½-inch-wide slices. Stand slices rounded-side up on the same baking sheet and return to the oven for 10 minutes. Cool completely.

To make glaze: In a small bowl whisk together powdered sugar, eggnog, and cinnamon. Using a fork, drizzle glaze over top of cooled biscotti. Set aside until glaze hardens. Store biscotti at room temperature in an airtight container for up to two weeks or freeze up to 6 months.

SPIKED HOLIDAY EGGNOG

During the holiday season Paul Martin's American Grill (paulmartinsamericangrill.com) in Westlake Village, serves its classic house eggnog, made fresh daily, as directed here. Considering its list of rich ingredients, this treat might take the place of dessert. Or not.

Makes 4 drinks

- 4 pasteurized eggs**
- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar, divided**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 2 cups milk**
- 2 ounces Maker's Mark Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whisky, or other bourbon**
- 1 ounce Myer's Original Dark Rum**
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg**
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract**

Separate the eggs; yolks in one bowl, whites in another. Set whites aside. Whisk yolks until they lighten in color, approximately 2 minutes. Add ½ cup of sugar and whisk until well blended and sugar has dissolved.

In a one-quart measuring cup or bowl with a pour spout, blend cream and milk and then slowly whisk into yolks. Add bourbon and rum and continue whisking. Grate nutmeg directly into cream yolk mixture. Add the vanilla extract, whisk, and set aside.

In the bowl of a standing mixer or in a medium bowl by hand, mix on medium speed or whisk egg whites until soft peaks form, adding remaining tablespoon of sugar while mixing or whisking.

Fold the beaten egg whites into the yolk mixture and whisk until fully blended. Refrigerate mixture until ready to serve. Divide among 4 glasses and serve immediately.

EGGNOG MARSHMALLOWS

"I wanted an off-the-cuff recipe to evoke holiday feelings but not something traditional," says personal chef Denisse Salinas of Santa Barbara's Le Petit Chef (lepetitchefsantabarbara.com) about her pillowy eggnog marshmallows. "The eggnog flavors added something a little more creative than your standard marshmallow." Salinas recommends putting a couple into hot cocoa or packaging them for an indulgent DIY holiday gift.

Makes 12 to 16 marshmallows

- Nonstick cooking spray**
- 2 ¼-ounce envelopes unflavored gelatin powder**
- ¾ cup cold water, divided**
- 2 cups granulated sugar, divided**
- ⅔ cup light corn syrup**
- 2 egg whites**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- 2 tablespoons rum**
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon**
- ⅔ cup powdered sugar**
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch**

Coat an 8-inch-square baking pan with nonstick cooking spray, line with wax paper, then spray the wax paper. In a bowl, sprinkle gelatin over ½ cup of cold water and set aside.

In a small saucepan over medium heat, bring remaining ¼ cup water, 1¼ cup granulated sugar, and corn syrup to a boil. Continue cooking 12 to 15 minutes until temperature registers 260°F on a candy thermometer. Remove from heat, add gelatin mixture, and stir to combine.

In a medium bowl combine egg whites and salt and beat until foamy with an electric mixer on high speed. Gradually add remaining ¼ cup granulated sugar and beat until stiff peaks form, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add rum, nutmeg, and gelatin mixture and continue beating for 7 minutes or until consistency becomes thick.

Pour mixture into prepared pan, cover, and let stand at room temperature for 1 to 2 hours. Using a knife coated with nonstick cooking spray, cut mixture into 1-inch-square marshmallows. In a medium bowl, combine cinnamon, powdered sugar, and cornstarch and toss marshmallows in mixture to coat. Store marshmallows in an airtight container between layers of wax or parchment paper in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks.

GINGERSNAP AND CRANBERRY BREAD PUDDING WITH EGGNOG SAUCE

This show-stopping bread pudding comes from corporate pastry chef Julia San Bartolome of Sweet Arleen's (sweetarleens.com), a gourmet treats shop in Westlake Village. "I wanted to capture different holiday flavors like gingersnaps and cranberries," she says. Sweet Arleen's uses fresh bread instead of stale to make bread pudding because, Bartolome says, "fresh, good bread gives it a more consistent texture."

Serves 8 to 10

BREAD PUDDING

Nonstick cooking spray

- 2 eggs**
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar**
- ½ cup whole milk**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 5 slices buttermilk bread, cubed**
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted**
- ⅓ cup white chocolate pieces**
- 3 ounces gingersnap cookies (about 12 2-inch-diameter cookies), cut into about 6 small pieces per cookie**
- 5½ ounces cranberry pulp strained from 1 can of whole berry (not jellied) cranberry sauce**

EGGNOG SAUCE

- 1 cup whole milk**
- 5 egg yolks**
- ½ cup granulated sugar**
- 5 ounces dark rum**
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves**
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 14 ounces canned sweetened condensed milk**

To make bread pudding: Preheat oven to 325°F. Coat an 8x8-inch baking pan with non-stick cooking spray.

In a large metal bowl, whisk together eggs, sugar, milk, cream, vanilla, cinnamon, and salt. Fold bread cubes into the mixture, followed by melted butter, white chocolate, and cookie pieces. Gently fold in cranberry pulp just enough to marble the batter. Do not completely mix in the pulp. Pour into prepared baking pan

and bake 20 to 30 minutes or until the center is set. Cool. Cut bread pudding into squares.

To make sauce: Heat milk in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Whisk together egg yolks and sugar in a metal bowl. Gradually whisk small amounts of hot milk into yolk mixture, then return mixture to saucepan. Cook over low-medium heat 8 to 10 minutes to thicken. Add rum, vanilla, and spices and transfer rum mixture to a shallow metal bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Shortly before 1 hour is up, whip cream in a medium bowl with an electric mixture to form soft peaks. Remove chilled rum mixture from refrigerator and stir in sweetened condensed milk. Fold in whipped cream. Cut bread pudding into 8 to 10 pieces and serve with eggnog sauce spooned on top.

EGGNOG PANCAKES

"There's nothing cozier than enjoying a stack of soft, fluffy eggnog pancakes for breakfast in your pajamas this holiday season," says Salinas, whose personal chef services at Le Petit Chef include small-scale catering, cooking classes, meal delivery, and in-home cooking. For thinner pancakes, she suggests whisking an extra ¼ to ½ cup of eggnog or milk into the batter.

Makes about 10

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 2¼ cups eggnog, room temperature
- ¼ cup butter, melted, plus more for greasing the griddle

In a medium-size bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg. Set aside. In a separate bowl, whisk together eggs, eggnog, and ¼ cup melted butter. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Don't overmix; a few lumps are OK.

Heat a griddle or skillet over medium-low. Grease hot surface with butter. Pour ½ cup batter on griddle to form a pancake. Cook until edges look dry and bubbles begin to form on the surface and sides, about 1 to 2 minutes. Flip and cook on the opposite side for another 2 minutes until lightly browned. Repeat for remaining batter, coating griddle with butter as needed. Keep finished pancakes warm on a baking sheet in a 200°F oven.

More Delicious Eggnogery

Don't have the time or energy to make your own? Get ready-made eggnog specialties at these locations.

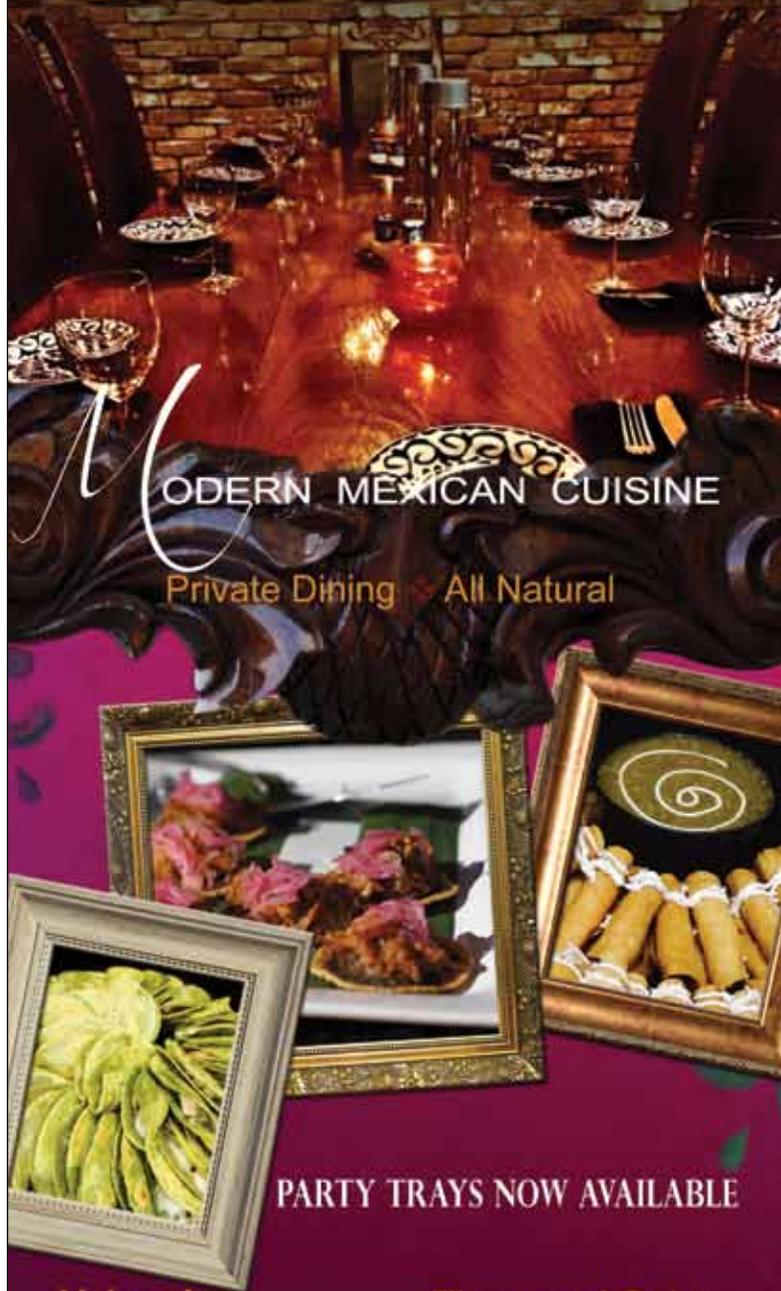
The Hungry Cat (thehungrycat.com) restaurant in Santa Barbara sells Big Dave's Eggnog, named for the father of the restaurant's chef and owner, David Lentz. Made from a closely guarded family recipe, it's available for takeout in reusable flip-top glass bottles or served by the glass in the restaurant throughout the holiday season.

McConnell's Fine Ice Creams (mcconnells.com) serves special off-the-menu Eggnog 'n' Toasted Hazelnut Shortbread Sammies at its downtown Santa Barbara scoop shop during the month of December. A longstanding McConnell's favorite, the eggnog flavor is "a super-creamy, spicy mix of Sri Lankan cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice, with a hit of vanilla extract from Lochhead Manufacturing Company and a smidgen of rum-spiked sweetness," says co-owner Michael Palmer.

Finished with dark chocolate and cinnamon sugar, creamy, white chocolate eggnog truffles by **Jessica Foster Confections** (jessicafosterconfections.com) are spiked with bourbon and a warm hint of nutmeg. Packages of them are available for purchase on the website and at Foster's Santa Barbara location by appointment. ♦

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